DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 225 661 PS 013 310

AUTHOR Breeding, John; And Others
TITLE An Analysis of the Structure of Preschool Social Competence.
PUB DATE Apr 82
NOTE 26p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southwestern Psychological Association (Dallas, TX, April 15-17, 1982).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Age Differences; Anglo Americans; Blacks; Cultural Differences; *Ethnic Groups; *Factor Structure; *Interpersonal Competence; Mexican Americans; Models; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; *Sex Differences; Socialization

ABSTRACT

Through the use of a model combining constructs proposed by Zigler and Trickett (1978) and Schaefer (1978), the structure of social competence in preschool children was investigated. Measures chosen for inclusion in the assessment battery and specific variables related to each measure were the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Revised (intelligence), the Cooperative Preschool Inventory (achievement), the Test Behavior Inventory (task orientation, love/hostility, introversion/extroversion), the Perceived Competence Scale for Young Children (motivation), and the Self Concept and Motivation Inventory (emotion). A total of 128 children of low socioeconomic status were assessed. Subjects, between 4.0 and 5.5 years of age, were of both sexes and from three ethnic groups (Anglo, Black, and Mexican-American). Each child received a battery of four tests over two testing sessions. In each session a cognitive and an affective (intrapersonal) test were administered. Examiners rated the behavior each child displayed in the test situation. Results, considered preliminary, include findings concerning relationships between indices of competence both within and across areas of competence, and outcomes of the factor analysis for the total sample and the variables of age, sex, ethnicity, and sex by ethnicity. Due in part to the finding of striking differences in what might be called accuracy of self-perception, it is concluded that, while examination of the structure of social competence is a promising endeavor, considerations of subcultural differences are paramount. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED225661

AN ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURE OF PRESCHOOL SOCIAL COMPETENCE

by

John Breeding

Paul A. Miller

Craig Porterfield

PS013310

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southwestern Psychological Association, Dallas, 1982

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

John Breeding

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The last twenty years has seen a significant paradigmatic shift (Kuhn, 1962) in the scientific study of child psychology. This shift has had important implications for the study of early childhood. Whereas the history of child psychology stems largely from a Freudian focus on pathology and maladaptation, the "discovery" of Piaget in the 1950s, together with Robert White's(1959) seminal work on effectance motivation, touched off efforts to capture the idea that the child was contributing to his own development. With this important theoretical shift, it became possible to view the child as intrinsically motivated, neither driven by psychosexual urges as the Freudians would have it, nor by externally imposed contingencies, as held by the behaviorists. Lois Murphy(1962) contributed greatly to this trend in her detailed descriptions of what children do when they do things right, when they succeed, and how they change and grow throughout the course of adaptation. More and more, research on the social development of children is attempting to characterize the nature of competent behavior in children.

In 1973, the Office of Child Development sponsored a panel of experts in an attempt to specify and define the meaning of "social competency". As Anderson and Messick(1974) report, the panel found the task extremely complex, and the field of social behaviors largely undefined. The panel attempted to meet its task by proposing 29 facets of social competence, suggesting that they might serve as goals for early intervention. Zigler and Trickett(1978) discuss the issue of social competence and suggest that it be the preferred index for measuring the success of programs attempting to promote children's development, e.g., Head Start.

As these authors illustrate in their work, Competence, as a global term, has been used to refer to a wide range of behaviors and personal characteristics. In developing their social competence construct, Zigler and Trickett propose two broad criteria in considering the measurement of competence; 1) the success of the human being in meeting societal expectancies, and 2) the actualization or personal development of the human being. They then recommend specific indices for a social competence index: 1) physical health, 2) achievement, 3) formal cognitive ability(IQ usually), and 4) motivational and emotional variables. This index is impressive and clearly improves past efforts to characterize the expected outcomes for early inter-

vention programs. However, there appears to be a notable omission. That is, in their long list of recommended variables and assessment indices, they appear to have omitted major dimensions of behavioral adjustment. The child's behavior in the social context would seem to be an important aspect of social competence to assess.

Schaefer(1978) takes a somewhat different approach as he provides us with a model of the major dimensions of competence in young children(Figure 1). For him, Adaptation is the superordinate construct, subsuming Social adjustment and Academic competence which then become the two major tasks of adaptation. Social adjustment refers broadly to the child's becoming fit for group living, while the Academic competence dimension refers more to the child's meeting the common needs of a social group.

Schaefer's summary of his own work and that of many others indicates that there are two principal and largely independent dimensions that account for a substantial portion of the variance in social adjustment. While these dimensions have been given different labels by different investigators, Schaefer uses the terms "INTROVERSION-EXTROVERSION" and "LOVE-HOSTILITY" to describe these bipolar dimensions. The circumplex model of social adjustment formed by these two dimensions is shown in Figure 2. Schaefer's two dimensions form the principal axes. The dotted lines represent bipolar sectors which intersect the four quadrants formed by the circumplex. The dimensions labelled here are derived from the work of Kohn(1977) in his replication of Schaefer's model at the preschool level. These dimensions are characterized by Kohn as FRIENDLY-CONFIDENT vs. ANXIOUS-WITHDRAWN and COOPERATIVE-COMPLIANT vs. ANGER-DEFIANCE. Since this research focuses on preschool children, Kohn's factors are of special importance as behavioral measures of social adjustment. Incidentally, the clinically-oriented reader may be more familiar with Peterson's (1961) characterization of these factors at the negative poles. He named them "personality problems" and "conduct problems", two types of clinical syndromes.

Schaefer's second major dimension, Academic competence, also has two principal components(Figure 1). They are INTELLIGENCE and TASK ORIENTATION. The intelligence component is what has been typically been measured in past assessments of "competence" and of the outcomes

of early childhood intervention programs. Furthermore, it has been repeatedly found to be a factor that is related to most indices of success in later performances of the child(eg., school). The second component, TASK ORIENTATION, historically has not been separated from the social adjustment dimension identified by Kohn(1977) as ANGER-DEFIANCE. The status of this variable in the structure of competence remains unresolved at present. For example, Quay and Werry(1979) point out that hyperactivity, which is characterized by poor task orientation, is correlated .6 or better with aggression. Using Schaefer's Classroom Behavior Inventory, Kohn(1977) showed that Task Orientation and Anger-Defiance were not independent, correlating between .54 and .64 in the first to the fourth grade. On the other hand, Kohn, in an earlier study(1973a) found that Task Orientation correlated significantly with preschool achievement and also predicted elementary school achievement much better than Anger-Defiance, providing some support for Schaefer's isolation of Task Orientation as a separate dimension of competence. For the present, it appears that, in spite of the overlap, Schaefer is justified in considering TASK ORIENTATION as a major component of competence. Further research is still needed, however, to resolve the issue.

A Proposed Model

In an attempt to integrate the excellent efforts of Zigler and Trickett(1978) and Schaefer(1978), let's begin by recalling that the former authors recommend two broad criteria in considering variables for inclusion in an index of social competence: 1) success in meeting societal expectancies, and 2) self-actualization or personal development. These authors recommended physical health, achievement, formal cognitive, and motivational/emotional indices of social competence. Schaefer's work has, in effect, broken out the criterion, "success in meeting societal expectancies", into two broad areas, "Academic Competence", consisting of Intelligence and Task Orientation, and "Social Adjustment", consisting of Introversion-Extroversion and Love-Hostility. In his Social Adjustment dimension, he identifies the behavioral aspects of adaptation or competence that Zigler and Trickett appear to omit in their theoretical index of competence. Conversely, by looking at Schaefer's model closely, one sees that his focus on adaption to the external

environment(with categories of intelligence, task orientation, and social behavior) leaves out motivational/emotional variables which Zigler and Trickett pay special attention to in their second criteria for a total social competence index, "self-actualization or personal development". Figure 3 presents a synthesized model of social competence which subsumes the recommendations of both Zigler and Trickett(1978) and Schaefer(1978).

The research reported herein is based on this attempt to integrate both models in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of social competence. For the purposes of this presentation, and to reduce confusion over terminology, COMPETENCE will be our superordinate term, defined similarly to White's(1968) concept of competence as "the organism's fitness or ability to carry on those transactions with the environment which result in its maintaining itself, growing and flourishing"(p. 100). There are three major dimensions that subsume Schaefer's and Zigler and Trickett's components. They are COGNITIVE, INTERPERSONAL, and INTRAPERSONAL aspects of competence.

COGNITIVE competence refers to formal cognitive ability, achievement and task orientation. INTERPERSONAL competence refers to Schaefer's two dimensions of social adjustment, love-hostility and introversion-extroversion. INTRAPERSONAL competence refers to the motivational/emotional components of the child's self system; at this age, this can be considered as the rudimentary internalization of competence.

Figure 3, then, is a hypothetical model representing three principal dimensions of a person's relation to the world; the ability to learn and achieve goals, the ability to interact successfully in social interpersonal situations, and self-perceptions about one's abilities and performance in cognitive and interpersonal domains, creating a third object of interaction, ie., the self. Thus, a careful selection of measures in each of the three dimensions should provide a very useful battery for assessing the factor structure of competence in preschool children.

Statement of Research Purpose

The research discussed below presents the results of a factor analytic study of the three dimensions of competence logically outlined above. The purpose of this study is to examine the nature of the structure of social competence and the interrelationship o

the various dimensions. There has been little previous empirical research on this issue, especially with respect to preschool aged children. Zigler and Trickett(1978) point out that the relationship between success in meeting societal expectations(eg., achievement) and self-actualization or personal development(eg., motivational/ emotional) is an open question. Our research specifically addresses the question of the structure of social competence in preschool children by measuring two variables in each of the three areas presented in the above model., ie., Cognitive, Interpersonal and Intrapersonal aspects of competence.

PROCEDURE

Subjects

One hundred twenty-eight low SES children of both sexes and three ethnic groups(Anglo, Black, and Mexican-American), ages 4-0 to 5-6, were assessed. Each child received a battery of four tests over two testing sessions. In each session a cognitive and an affective (intrapersonal) test were administered. The grouping and order of tests was counterbalanced, with the exception that the cognitive test was always administered first. The children's behavior during the testing situation was then rated by the examiner at the end of each session. The examiners were four graduate students, three female and one male. One female was Mexican-American, the others Anglo.

Instrumentation

Cognitive

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised(PPVT-R) A test of receptive language, this test also serves as an IQ surrogate(median correlation of PPVT with WISC = .64). Split-half and test-retest reliability averages .74 and .75, respectively, for children ages 4-0 to 5-6. Standard scores, corrected for age, will be used in the analyses. (Dunn & Dunn, 1981)

Cooperative Preschool Inventory(PI) This test serves as a general index of preschool achievement, measuring areas of number concepts and ordination, concepts of size, shape, motion and color, associative vocabulary, and personal-social responsiveness. Internal consistency coefficients average .88; test-retest reliability is also generally greater than .80(Caldwell, 1980). As with the PPVT-R, age-corrected standard scores will be used in the analyses.

Interpersonal

Test Behavior Inventory(TBI) This instrument is a rating scale of the subject's test behavior. It consists of 26 items that yield two factors which correspond very well to the two dimensions fo social adjustment discussed above. The first factor(TBI1), Confident-Friendly vs. Anxious-Withdrawn, is analogousto Schaefer's Introversion-Extroversion. The second factor(TBI2), Attentive-Cooperative vs. Distractible-Disruptive, corresponds well to Schaefer's Love-Hostility dimension. Average interrater reliability was reported by Kohn and Rosman(1973b) as .75 for Factor 1 and .89 for Factor 2.

While this is a rating of test behavior, it should be pointed out that these factors do correlate with teacher ratings of overall classroom behavior on similar dimensions(r= .49 and .43, respectively). Thus, in addition to measuring children's ability to cope with a strange adult in a strange situation, it is possible to assume that the children's behavior is to some degree representative of their overall school adjustment. Factor scores, averaged over the two testing sessions, will be used in our analyses.

Intrapersonal

Perceived Competence Scale for Young Children(PCS) Perceived Competence is Susan Harter's(1978) conceptual and operational definition of self-esteem, based on her model of the development of effectance motivation. Specifically, it is a pictorial self-report measure which reflects the child's perception of his/her competence. 12 items reflecting different aspects of physical and cognitive competence form a general "perceived competence" factor at the preschool level. This factor score is used in this research. Internal consistency reliability of the factor is .71 for preschool children(Harter & Pike, 1981).

Self-Concept and Motivation Inventory(SCAMIN) The Academic Self-Concept scale, consisting of 12 items to which the child responds by pointing to a sad, neutral or happy face, is defined by the test authors as follows:

> the Academic Self-Concept is how a child views his role as a learner in school. It is the student's sum of experiences, perceptions, attitudes and feelings about school and achoolwork.

Basically, the items reflect the child's feelings of positive acceptance by significant others and positive self-regard about school-related experiences. It very much appears to reflect an affective or feeling tone; that is, how good does a child feel about his/her experience of being involved in school and schoolwork. Milchus(1979) reports a Spearman-Brown reliability coefficient of .79 for this scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Relationships Between Indices of Competence

Within Areas of Competence

Table 1 shows the correlations between the six variables measured in this study. Within the Cognitive domain, the Preschool Inventory and Peabody Vocabulary, both standard scores, correlated .60. This is highly consistent with research reported by Caldwell(1980). Our two Interpersonal dimensions, Confident-Friendly vs. Anxious-Withdrawn, and Attentive-Cooperative vs. Distractible-Disruptive, hereafter referred to by their negative poles for convenience, correlated .29. Again, this is consistent with previous research on the relationship of the two circumplex dimensions(Kohn, 1977). While there is a positive relationship, the two dimensions are clearly measuring different aspects of child behavior. In the Intrapersonal domain, our two indices(Perceived Competence and Academic Self-Concept) showed a small, marginally significant, correlation of .14. For the overall sample of children, perceptions of self-competence are only weakly related to sense of pleasure in school and schoolwork. There are some preliminary, but very interesting exceptions to this result which we will discuss after looking at the factor structure.

Across Areas of Competence

It can also be seen from Table 1 that test behavior is significantly related to performance on the cognitive tests. Both behavioral dimensions correlate twice as well(.40s to .20s) with the PI as with the PPVT-R. This is expected since the PI is a more active test, requiring a great deal of social participation and responsiveness. In addition, to the extent that one can consider the PPVT-R as an IQ index, then interpersonal behavior may be less related to IQ than to achievement. At any rate, our correlations between the test behavior factors and the PI are higher than those that Kohn and Rosman(1973a)

found with a five-year-old sample. These authors, using Schaefer's three Classroom Behavior Inventory dimensions(Apathy/Withdrawal, Anger/Defiance, and Task Orientation), reported correlations of .27, .07, and .29 with the PI. Our Anxious/Withdrawn factor, analagous to Kohn and Rosman's Apathy/Withdrawal, correlated .40 with the PI, quite a bit higher than their .27 correlation. Even more striking was the fact that our Factor 2, Distractible-Disruptive, correlated .49 with the PI whereas, in Kohn and Rosman's study, Anger/Defiance correlated only .07 with the PI. Kohn(1977) points out that this second dimension generally shows significantly lower relationship to actual achievement than does Apathy/Withdrawal. We feel that this finding supports our previous contention that the second test behavior dimension measures task orientation in addition to love-hostility. Task Orientation correlated .29 with the PI in Kohn and Rosman's study, further supporting this contention. Two other explanations seem plausible in accounting for the generally greater relationship between Interpersonal and Cognitive competence in our research. First, that we are measuring behavior within the testing situation is likely to reduce cross-situational differences. Second, it is very possible that our younger sample and slightly larger age range may have produced a stronger relationship in our study.

The relationship between Cognitive and Intrapersonal competence is generally low. Perceived Competence correlates .18 with the PI and .20 with the PPVT-R. Academic Self-Concept is unrelated to both cognitive measures. Both Intrapersonal competence measures are unrelated to the two behavioral dimensions. Generally speaking, it appears that the rudiments of internalization are largely unrelated to other aspects of competence in this population. This is certainly not a surprising finding in that these children are still in the preoperational phase, where differentiation of self from others and stabilization of self-feelings is still developing and highly context-dependent. This is particularly true concerning affect or pleasure in school-related tasks as reflected in the SCAMIN. Perceived Competence in school tasks at least shows some relationship to actual achievement.

Factor Structure

Scarr(1981) addressed the structure of competence in preschool-age children by factor analyzing a variety of cognitive and behavioral measures in 2-4 year old children. While Scarr referred to her behavioral measures as indices of motivation, a perusal of their labels(ie., attention, activity level, task orientation, social responsiveness, social adjustment and cooperation) shows that they largely reflect our Interpersonal dimensions. Scarr's factor analysis yielded a principal factor

which she called "general competence" on which all the above variables loaded along with IQ. Scarr concluded that "In early childhood, motivation and cognition are so interrelated at any one point in time that they form a general competence factor"(p. 1160). Our data provides interesting results concerning this assumption especially with regard to the affectively-oriented measures, Perceived Competence and Academic Self-Concept.

Total Sample

In all the analyses Principal Components solutions with Varimax rotation are reported. Table 2 shows the results of the factor analyses for the total sample and for the different sexes and ethnic groups. For the total sample, a two factor solution emerged. The first factor, called "general competence", consisted of both Cognitive and Interpersonal variables, and accounted for 83% of the variance in the six measures. This replicates Scarr's results at the next age level(4-0 to 5-6). However, the two Intrapersonal measures formed an independent, though weak, second factor.

Age

In general, age was largely unrelated to the six competence measures. A notable exception was that age correlated .29 with Attentive-Cooperative vs. Distractible-Disruptive, older kids being less distractible and disruptive in the testing situation. We did separate factor analyses for three age groupings; 4-0 to 4-5, 4-6 to 4-11, and 5-0 to 5-5(Ns = 49, 41, and 36). The general competence factor accounted for about 75% of the variance in each group, but "Distractible-Disruptive" did not load on this factor in the oldest group. It may be that this dimension is less related to competence in older children. This would be consistent with Kohn's(1977) conclusion that Anger/Defiance is not highly related to achievement with five-year-old children and at the elementary age. This poses an intriguing question as to the developmental process here. That is, it is possible that this dimension is more highly related to achievement in very young than in older children. An alternative explanation for the discrepant results hinges on the extent to which Kohn's Anger/Defiance and Schaefer's Task Orientation are being confused in our data, an issue discussed previously in examining correlations between Cognitive and Interpersonal variables. The second factor in our analyses showed no consistent pattern in the three age groups, suggesting that Perceived Competence and Academic Self-Concept relate to the Cognitive and Interpersonal variables differentially at different ages.

Sex

The factor analysis for the males(N=65) yielded only one factor(see Table 2),

consisting primarily of the Cognitive and Interpersonal variables. Analysis of the girls' data replicated the total sample results, with the Intrapersonal factor even stronger for the girls than for the total sample. It appears that the Intrapersonal dimension may be more independent of other components of competence for girls than for boys.

Ethnicity

Separate factor analyses were also run for Black(N=53) and Mexican-American (N=60) subsamples(the Anglo sample was too small). The results for the Mexican-American sample basically replicated those for the total sample, one factor combining Cognitive and Interpersonal variables and a second weaker Intrapersonal factor. The analysis of the Black sample also yielded a two-factor solution, but with an important difference. For Blacks, the PPVT-R did not load on the first factor which was composed of the PI and the two test behavior dimensions. The second factor consisted of the PPVT-R and the PI again. Our preliminary interpretation of these results is that Factor 1 may be a social and cognitive Performance dimension, independent of language. We labelled Factor 2 Verbal Ability, representing the PPVT-R and probably the verbal aspects of the PI. It may be that "general competence", to the extent that language is an important part, may not correctly describe the sample of Black children in this study. We emphasize these results as tentative. However, they may have important implications. Our results seem inconsistent with the results of Reynolds'(1980) study of the construct validity of a preschool battery in which he found language to load on a "general readiness" factor in several subsamples, including Black children. A possible explanation is that his sample primarily employed lower middle SES subjects, whereas our sample consists entirely of children from lower SES families.

Sex by Ethnicity

To shed light on the differences in the factors between the sexes and ethnic groups, we conducted further factor analyses by sex/ethnicity groupings. This analysis revealed an even more complex pattern(see TAble 3). Factor analyses were run for four subgroups; Mexican-American males, Mexican-American females, Black males and Black females(Ns= 31, 29, 27, 26). For the Mexican-Americans, fairly close facsimiles of the original two factor solution resulted in both the male and female analyses.

The findings in the two Black subgroups were quite different, however. In the Black male sample, the general competence factor(albeit with a slightly smaller .40 loading of the PPVT-R) emerged. The second factor consisted of

Perceived Competence, which by the way is negatively related to Academic Self-Concept in this subsample.

With the girls, a three factor solution emerged. The first factor consisted of high loadings of the PI and our Distractible-Disruptive dimension. The second factor, with a high PPVT-R loading and a moderate PI loading is very similar to the Verbal Ability factor found in the overall Black subsample. Thus, the data suggest that it is the Black females in which Verbal Ability constitutes a separate dimension of social competence.

Again, this level of analysis must be considered exploratory. If the results hold through further analyses, it would suggest that we must be very careful in generalizing what we mean by "competence" across different populations, even within a narrow social class spectrum. Though it may be less confusing, we should not too readily fall back on generalizations made from overall analyses which collapse various groups of children or from analyses whose sample represents only one sex or ethnic group(eg., White males).

One Other Intriguing Finding

An interesting pattern of results was detected during our consideration of sex and ethnic differences in the factor structure. This pattern was in the relationship between Perceived Competence and actual achievement(PI), a question of considerable theoretical import(see Harter, in press). The correlation between Perceived Competence and the Preschool Inventory was .18 for our total sample. This fits nicely with Harter's results which show an ascending pattern of correlations between Perceived Competence and achievement test scores from the third through sixth grades(.27, .40, .45, .45), suggesting that children become increasingly better able to make realistic judgments about their competence as they get older. What is very interesting about our data is that we found that this correlation was much higher(about .3) for both the Black and the Male subgroups. Conversely, Perceived Competence and the PI were totally unrelated in the Mexican-American and Female samples. Thus, we see striking differences in what might be called Accuracy of Self-Perception. One possible explanation for these differences is that Blacks and Males are receiving more contingent evaluative feedback, thus enhancing congruence between perceived and actual competence. This finding seems to fit pretty well with the literature on sex differences.

A second aspect of this picture is that the reverse pattern occurred in the relationship between Perceived Competence and Academic Self-Concept. While the

overall correlation was .14, for girls and for Mexican-Americans it was about .3; in contrast, for Blacks and for boys the two variables were unrelated. If one considers the correlation to reflect the relationship between perceptions of one's own competence and one's sense of positive affect or pleasure derived from school, then this pattern of results poses a difficult question. That is, why does accuracy of self-perception appear to vary inversely with degree of congruence between Perceived Competence and School Affect.

Harter(1980) makes an important distinction between two types of reactions that socializing agents can take toward children's mastery attempts. We can react to the product in an evaluative manner, or we can respond affectively to the child's own pleasure and feelings of efficacy, appreciating effort as a worthwhile endeavor, independent of product. It would seem, then, that the evaluative response is more likely to enhance accuracy of self-perception(ie., the correlation between Perceived Competence and achievement). In contrast, an affective response that rewards mastery attempts may be more likely to ensure that one's Perceived Competence relates better to affect about school, or pleasure in doing schoolwork. Could it be that boys and Blacks are getting more evaluative feedback, whereas girls and Mexican-Americans receive more non-contingent affective reactions from their respective socializing agents? At any rate, this is an intriguing question which must await further research.

It should be immediately pointed out, however, the above two types of socializing agent responses are certainly not mutually exclusive. It is very possible to give both evaluative product-oriented feedback and affective reward for mastery attempts. This issue intrigued us so that we examined these two correlations in our two sex by ethnicity groupings. Table 4 shows that, in our data, the configuration of accurate self-perception together with congruence of Perceived Competence and Academic Self-Concept was also present. Could it be that Black girls and Mexican-American boys are, in a sense, getting the best of both worlds?

CONCLUSION

Interest in the area of social competence in children has emerged rapidly in the last twenty years largely due to two reasons; dissatisfaction with attempts to define child psychology in the terms of adult intrapsychic conflict, and dissatisfaction with the limitations of the IQ as the primary index of successful early childhood intervention. Several authors have attempted to define the major dimensions of social competence in children. We have combined the work of two

such efforts(Schaefer, 1978; Zigler & Trickett, 1978) in recommending a tripartite model which considers three broad areas of competence; Cognitive, Interpersonal (social behavior) and Intrapersonal(internalized aspects of the self system).

After defining these three areas, we measured 128 disadvantaged children on six variables representing two indices of each area of competence. Analysis of the structure of this set of variables suggests that there is, indeed, a "general competence" factor in early childhood, but that Verbal Ability may constitute a separate dimension in the Black females. It also appears that the rudimentary internalization of competence at this age is largely unrelated to cognitive or interpersonal competence, especially in the females.

Despite this general finding of the independence of Intrapersonal competence from the other two dimensions, there were notable exceptions. Also, on the whole, the relationship was stronger for boys than for girls. A very interesting question emerged as to the development of accurate self-perception and congruence between self-perception and affect. This issue was discussed in light of possible sex and ethnic differences in socialization practices.

The results reported in this paper are, of course, preliminary, and await further analyses. Although it is felt that the proposed model provides excellent guidance in selecting a preschool battery of social competence, our actual operational definitions impose limitations in interpretation of the data. Two issues are as follows: 1) We measure test behavior; while there is a relationship between test behavior and classroom behavior, the degree to which we can generalize to overall interpersonal competence is limited. 2) We pointed out that the second Test Behavior Inventory factor, Attentive-Cooperative vs. Distractible-Disruptive, may involve a conceptual overlap between Schaefer's dimensions of Love-hostility and Task Orientation. We posited that our findings of a stronger relationship of this factor to cognitive competence than found previously(Kohn, 1977) may have been due to this confound. Further research should clarify the issue.

It seems that, while examination of the structure of social competence is a promising endeavor, considerations of subcultural differences are paramount. We have barely touched on developmental issues and issues of causal relations among the various aspects of competence. The questions, however, literally jump out at those who delve into this area. Despite the fact that a "general competence" factor is often present, an examination of the correlations among the various measures reveals that they are generally not very large. A question for future research lies in the importance of these preschool indices for later success in life.

REFERENCES

Anderson, S., & Messick, S. Social competency in young children. Developmental Psychology, 1974, 10, 282-93.

Caldwell, B.M. & Freund, J.H. The Preschool Inventory. University of Arkansas, Little Rock, 1980.

Dunn, L.M., & Dunn, L.M. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised: Manual Circle Pines, Minn. American Guidance Service, 1981.

Harter, S. Effectance motivation reconsidered. Human Development, 1978, 21, 34-64.

Harter, S. The development of competence motivation in the mastery of cognitive and physical skills: Is there still a place for joy? Paper presented to the North American Society for Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity; Boulder, Colorado, 1980

Harter, S. The Perceived Competence Scale for Children. Child Development, in press.

Harter, S., & Pike, R. The Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Acceptance for Young Children: Manual. University of Denver, 1981.

Kohn, M. Social Competence, Symptoms and Underachievement in Childhood: A Longitudinal Perspective. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1977.

Kohn, M., & Rosman, B.L. Cognitive functioning in five-year-old boys as related to social-emotional and background demographic variables. Developmental Psychology, 1973, 8, 2, 277-94.

Kohn, M., & Rosman, B.L. Cross-situational and longitudinal stability of social-emotional functioning in young children. Child Development, 1973, 44, 721-7.

Milchus, R.J. Research studies Involving SCAMIN. Dearborn Hts., Mich. Person-O-Metrics, 1979.

Murphy, L.B. The Wide World of Childhood: Paths Toward Mastery. New York: Basic Books, 1962.

Quay, H.C., & Werry, J.S. Psychopathological Disorders of Childhood. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1979.

Reynolds, C.R. Differential construct validity of a preschool battery for blacks, whites, males and females. Journal of School Psychology, 18, 112-125.

Scarr, S. Testing for Children: Assessment and the many determinants of intellectual competence. American Psychologist, 1981, 36, 1159-66.

Schaefer, E.S. Factors that impede the process of socialization. In M.J. Bejab and S.A. Richardson (Eds.), The Mentally Retarded and Society: A Social Science Perspective. Baltimore: University Parks Press, 1978

Zigler, E., & Trickett, P.K. IQ, social competence, and evaluation of early childhood intervention programs. American Psychologist, 1978, 33,9, 789-798.

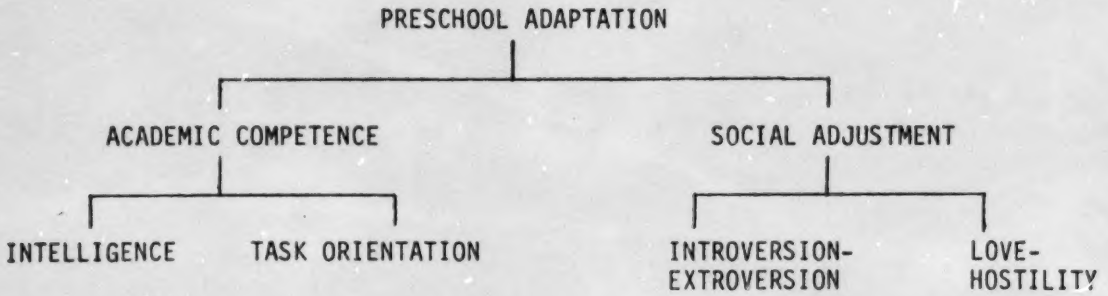

Figure 1. Schaefer's Hierarchial Model of Preschool Adaptation

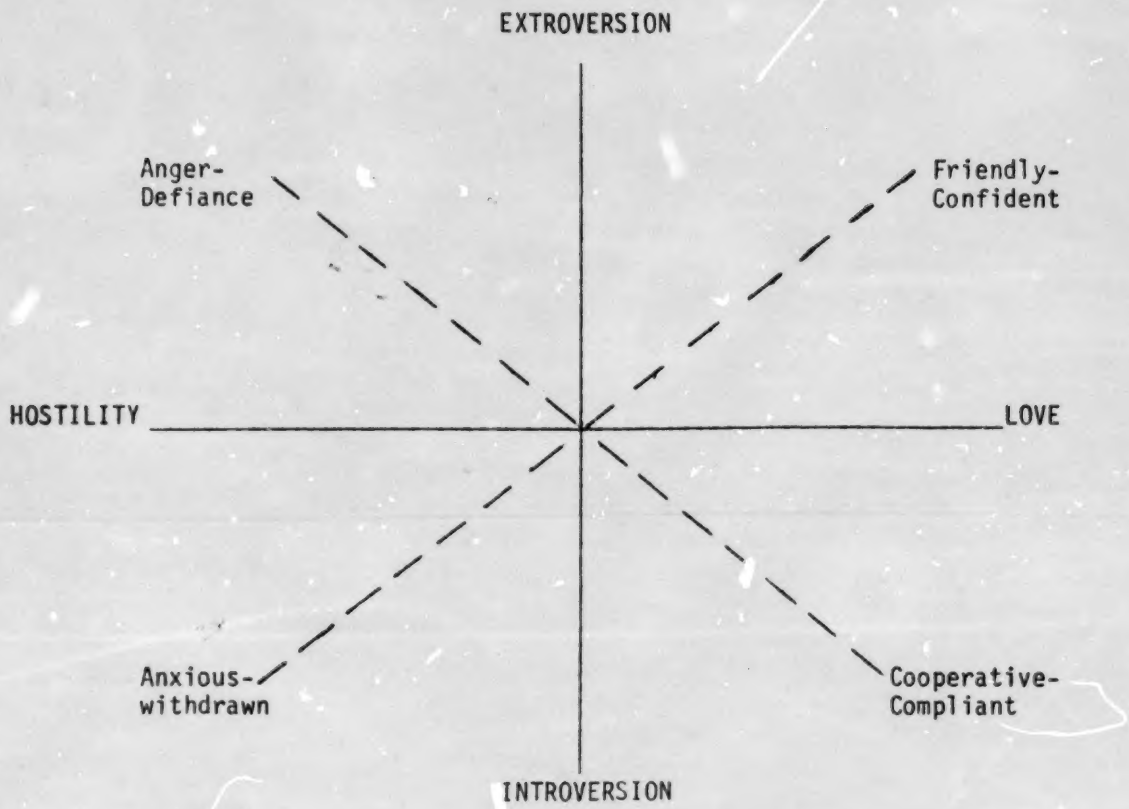

Figure 2. Schaefer's Circumplex Model of Social Adjustment

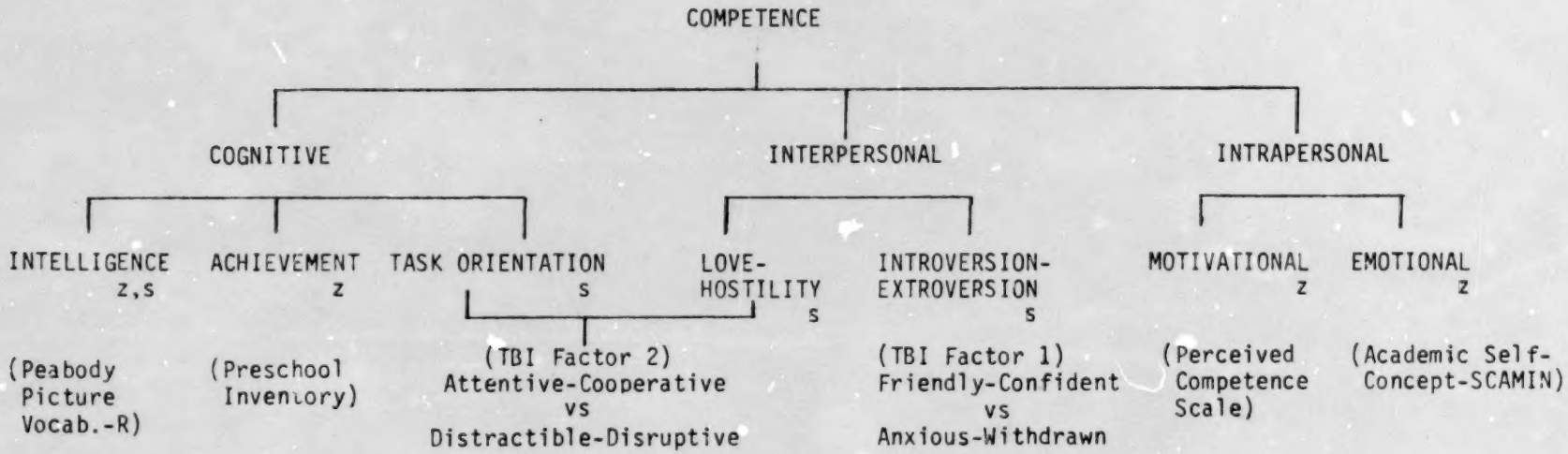

FIGURE 3. Proposed model of social competence

20

(z) construct proposed by Zigler & Trickett (1978)

(s) construct proposed by Schaefer (1978)

TABLE 1

INTERCORRELATIONS OF TEST MEASURES FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE

	Preschool Inventory	Peabody PVT-R	Friendly-Confident vs Anxious-Withdrawn	Attentive-Cooperative vs Distractible Disruptive	Perceived Competence	Academic Self Concept
PI		.60 (p .001)	.40 (p .001)	.49 (p .001)	.18 (p .022)	-.10 (p .128)
PPVT-R			.24 (p .004)	.21 (p .01)	.20 (p .014)	-.05 (p .294)
TBI-1				.29 (p .0001)	.07 (p .218)	-.01 (p .445)
TBI-2					.09 (p .143)	-.11 (p .110)
PCS						.14 (p .055)

TABLE 2

Factor Analyses for the Total Sample, Males, Females, Blacks and Mexican-Americans

Variables	Total Sample		Males	Females		Black		Mexican-American	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1*	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
Preschool Inventory	.98	.01	.89	1.00	-.05	.76	.56	.91	.08
Peabody PVT-R	.58	.16	.69	.50	.19	-.07	.88	.59	.09
TBI (Factor 1)	.43	-.01	.48	.37	1.10	.41	.18	.39	-.10
TBI (Factor 2)	.50	-.09	.50	.55	-.07	.73	.14	.53	.02
Perceived Competence	.20	.48	.33	.09	.54	.32	.18	.05	.67
Academic Self-Concept	-.12	.33	-.24	-.01	.54	-.20	.06	-.01	.38
Percent of Variance	83.2	16.8	100.0	73.2	26.8	77.9	22.1	73.1	26.9

* Only 1 factor resulted in the Male subsample

TABLE 3

Results of Factor Analyses for Sex/Ethnic Groupings

Variables	Black Males		Black Females			Mexican-American Males		Mexican-American Females	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
Preschool Inventory	.98	.22	.89	.46	.05	.89	-.04	.89	.02
Peabody PVT-R	.40	.33	.20	.86	.09	.70	-.10	.48	.12
TBI (Factor 1)	.66	.09	.17	-.04	.39	.31	-.29	.43	.03
TBI (Factor 2)	.50	.32	.74	.02	.21	.55	.03	.57	-.04
Perceived Competence	.07	.79	.32	.07	.50	.35	.73	-.11	.89
Academic Self-Concept	-.19	-.36	-.23	.30	.60	-.09	.24	.11	.39
Percent of Variance	78.1	21.9	60.0	22.6	17.4	72.8	27.2	61.8	38.2

TABLE 4

Perceived Competence as Related to Preschool Inventory and Academic Self-Concept in Sex and Ethnic Groupings

	Black		Mexican-American	
Measures	Males	Females	Males	Females
Preschool Inventory	.22	.40	.28	-.09
Academic Self-Concept	-.29	.26	.14	.35